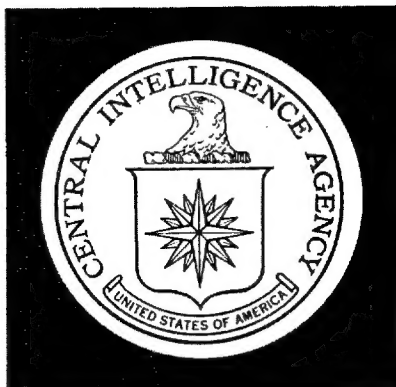


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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence Memorandum

RECENT ACTIVITIES IN NORTH VIETNAM

(4-10 NOVEMBER 1968)

NGA Review Complete

DIA review(s) completed.

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November 1968

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
12 November 1968

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Recent Activities in North Vietnam
(4-10 November 1968)

Summary

Since the bombing halt, North Vietnam has moved quickly to increase its logistic capabilities and to move large volumes of supplies openly. Nevertheless, traffic moving into Laos appeared to be at about the same level as that prior to the bombing halt, and traffic along the DMZ was slight. Heavy truck traffic was noted in photography throughout the Panhandle of North Vietnam, with indications that a strengthening of air defenses in Laos is under way. Antiaircraft weapons were reported moving south along the major access roads to Laos.

Rail activity throughout the upper Panhandle increased noticeably, and through traffic to Vinh from the north was restored, at least for tramcars.

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Road and bridge repair activities were evident through the Panhandle.

Repair and construction activities north of the 20th Parallel continued at a modest pace. Work has been resumed on the northern half of the

Note: This memorandum was produced solely by CIA. It was prepared jointly by the Office of Economic Research and the Office of Current Intelligence and was coordinated with the Director's Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs.

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Kep-Hon Gai rail line, and new rail spurs have been built into Haiphong storage areas. The capacity of the Haiphong West Powerplant has been increased to 50 percent of pre-bombing capacity.

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Surface-to-air missile defenses in North Vietnam have been upgraded by the reestablishment of fixed SAM maintenance facilities in the north and the deployment of at least one modified Fan Song radar south to Thanh Hoa.

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South of the 20th Parallel

Railroads

1. Through rail service using small tramcars from the north to Vinh was quickly restored following the bombing halt. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] two small trains consisting of small flatcars pulled by truck locomotives just north of Vinh. One fully loaded train was heading south, and a second train was heading north. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] railroad bypass bridges at Dien Chau and Tam Da, the two main chokepoints south of the 19th Parallel on the rail line to Vinh, were serviceable for tramcars.

2. Tramway traffic south of Vinh has increased since the bombing standdown. South of Vinh, two small trains were sighted heading south on the tramway south of Bai Duc Thom, a key supply base about 25 miles north of Mu Gia. Pilots had reported this tramway segment in operation prior to the bombing halt, but only nominal rail activity had been noted until the standdown.

3. Rail activity at Thanh Hoa also increased in the first week since the bombing halt. About 225 cars were noted in [REDACTED] photography of the rail yards, compared to an average of 155 cars observed in [REDACTED] photography. Activity at transloading areas also increased.

Truck Activity

4. Heavy truck traffic between the 19th Parallel, the DMZ, and the southern Laotian border areas was apparent [REDACTED] At Tam Da, ten miles south of the 19th Parallel, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] more than 200 trucks on coastal Route 1A concentrated on either bank of a ferry crossing. Prior to 1 November, only light vehicle traffic had been reported on this segment of Route 1A, while the major portion of north-south truck movements were observed over the several less vulnerable inland routes. At Vinh, heavy truck traffic was noted throughout

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the past week, primarily on Routes 1A, 82, 8211, and several secondary roads. About 200 trucks were noted [redacted] within the Vinh city limits. Past photographic coverage of Vinh rarely detected more than 30 to 50 vehicles within the city. On Routes 15, between 100 and 170 trucks were observed on several different days near Mu Gia Pass. On Route 137, as many as 70 trucks were sighted in one day. South of Dong Hoi and near the eastern and central portions of the DMZ, only light truck traffic was detected, but on 7 November a southbound convoy of 25 trucks was sighted near the terminus of Route 103, and about 25 additional trucks were observed moving north and south over Route 101 near the border.

Roadwatch Reporting

5. A roadwatch team [redacted] [redacted] an average of 13 trucks a day moving south toward Laos from 1 November to 3 November. An average of 19 trucks a day was reported moving south by this team in October. There have been no reports from this team since 3 November, and none since September from teams along Route 912, the other road leading into southern Laos.

Military Movements

6. Several pieces of artillery and antiaircraft equipment were noted in photography moving south toward Laos. [redacted] six trucks pulling 37/57-mm antiaircraft pieces were detected on Route 15 moving toward Mu Gia Pass. [redacted] three light antiaircraft pieces towed by possible tracked prime movers were noted on Route 15 near the Laotian border. [redacted] a light antiaircraft artillery piece was included in a 40-truck convoy moving south on Route 15 near the junction of Route 101. On [redacted] four 100/122-mm field guns towed by tracked prime movers were observed on Route 1A near Dien Chau.

Road Repairs

7. Considerable road and bridge repair activity in North Vietnam was detected in photography this past week. Bulldozers, dump trucks,


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and large work crews were repairing previously destroyed bridges, constructing new alternate pontoon bridge crossings, and repairing sections of the roadway. Most of the observed construction effort was concentrated on heavily bombed coastal Route 1A and its inland alternate, Route 82, with repair efforts noted along Route 1A from the DMZ to the Vinh area.

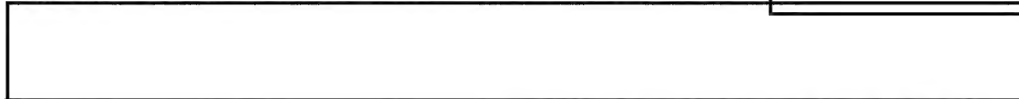
Watercraft Activity

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25X1 9. A major watercraft staging area is being established along the Nguon Nay River at Minh Cam, about 20 miles northwest of Quang Khe. 

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 Minh Cam is located near the present southern terminus of the rail tramway and near the heavily used inland waterway storage area at Mai Thuong.

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11. The overall capability of the North Vietnamese to move material to the southern part of the country by sea has been improved by the addition of at least eight more SL-1 cargo craft. Recent photography over Haiphong has revealed 24 Chinese Communist-built SL-1 cargo craft, eight more than

were previously estimated to be in the country.
The SL-1 can carry 200 tons, as much as 70 three-
ton trucks, at a speed of about 18 knots.



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Air Defense

15. A modified Fan Song missile guidance radar, initially detected in North Vietnam [redacted] was photographed in an unrevetted site near Thanh Hoa [redacted]. This is the first appearance of the modified Fan Song south of the 20th Parallel. An estimated 13 additional radars of this type are deployed in hardened sites in North Vietnam, ten near Hanoi and three around Haiphong.

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The Laotian Panhandle

Truck Traffic Reported by Pilots

16. Truck sightings reported by pilots during the first week of November continued a decline begun in early October despite a sharp increase in the number of sorties.

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	Trucks <u>a/</u>			
	<u>Sighted</u>	<u>De-</u> <u>stroyed</u>	<u>Damaged</u>	<u>Effective</u> <u>Losses <u>b/</u></u>
This week <u>c/</u> (1-7 Nov)	180	29	17	26
Weekly average 1968				
October	261	37	11	31
1st quarter	1,366	201	19	156
2nd quarter	1,356	167	15	129
3rd quarter	422	51	6	40
1 Jan-7 Nov	948	128	13	99

a. Based on data from DIA.

b. Effective losses are computed by deflating reports of destroyed and damaged trucks - by assuming that 75 percent of those reported destroyed and 25 percent of those reported damaged are actually destroyed and not returned to service. This formula allows for the capability of the North Vietnamese to repair trucks and for inaccuracies in pilot observations caused by high aircraft speeds, poor weather, smoke and dust after attacks, night operations, or intense antiaircraft fire.

c. Preliminary data.

17. The number of truck sightings and reported losses during the first two quarters of this year were significantly higher because they occurred during the dry season in Laos. The weather enabled the enemy to move large numbers of trucks into the Laotian Panhandle and at the same time provided a favorable flying environment for target acquisition and destruction of trucks by US air operations. With the advent of the wet season during the third quarter of this year, enemy truck activity decreased and poor flying weather hampered air operations.

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North of the 20th Parallel

Railroad Construction

20. The North Vietnamese have resumed work on the northern half of the 66-mile Kep-Hon Gai rail line after a three-month lull. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] six new rail spurs and three sizable bridges were in various stages of construction. The most important of these bridges is located in the hills about five miles south of the Song Nhat Duc. However, three miles of rail bed just north of the Song Nhat Duc are still partially submerged from summer floods.

21. Cargo-handling capabilities in Haiphong storage areas have been improved by the construction of two additional rail spurs, making a total of three new rail spurs noted since September. The new spurs are apparently responsible, at least in part, for the decrease noted since November in the amount of open-stored cargo at the port of Haiphong.

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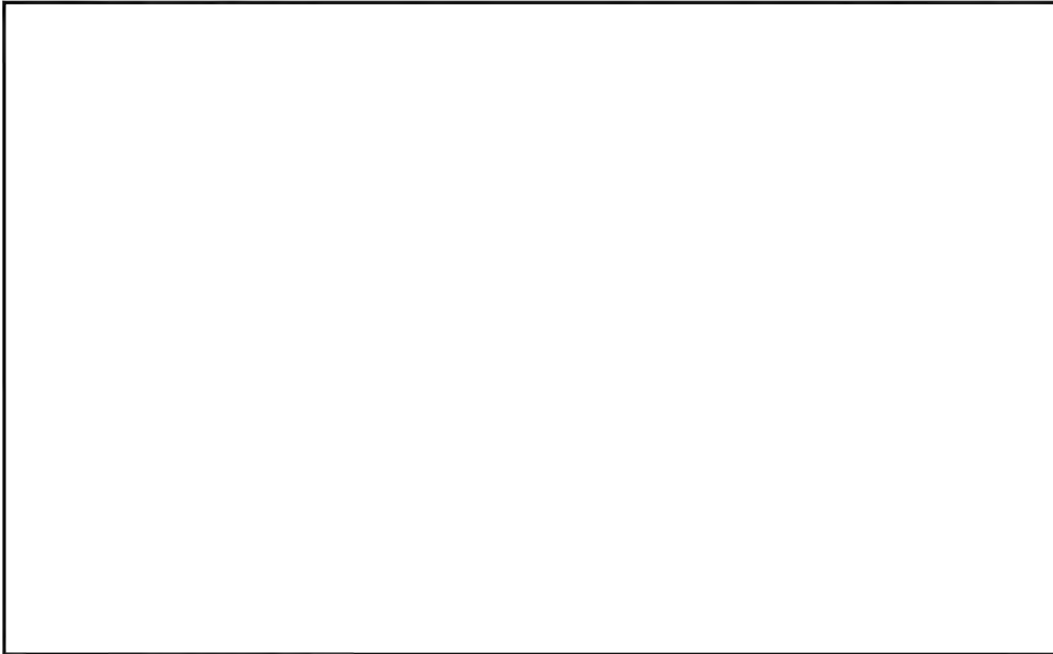
Industry

22. Industrial repair and construction activity were still at a moderate pace, according to limited photography

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The productive capability of Haiphong West Powerplant has been increased to 50 percent of capacity as a result of boiler repairs. Shutdown of the Nam Dinh Powerplant, apparently for major reconstruction, continued for the second consecutive month.

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Food Rations

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27. The North Vietnamese government announced that 60 percent of the "rice ration" in Hanoi would be made up of imported wheat flour [redacted]. This increase in substitutes for rice from 50 percent to 60 percent reflects the unsatisfactory yield of the fifth-month crop and the reduced rice stockpile which usually occurs before the tenth-month rice harvest. The current rate of rice substitution probably will remain in effect until at least the end of November, when harvesting of the tenth-month crop should be almost complete. If the yield of the troubled tenth-month crop is unsatisfactory, the present rice substitute ration may continue into 1969. Domestically produced secondary crops such as corn, sweet potatoes, and manioc also have been substituted for rice in increasing amounts during the war years.

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New Rail Spur at Haiphong Open Storage Area,

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SL-1-Type Cargo Ship

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